

# Outreach

Fall 2005

## Spreading Equality, Decency and Security – Many Milestones as the Work Continues *by Acting Governor Richard J. Codey*

As my tenure at the helm of the State of New Jersey draws to a close, I am filled with a sense of accomplishment for all we have undertaken.

The year 2005 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), the nation's oldest such state statute. It is a heritage that New Jerseyans can take pride in, as it ensures that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally.

Having a law such as the LAD isn't simply a matter of pride, it is an obligation to uphold its spirit and to actively search for areas where disparate treatment and inequality remain. As Acting Governor, I have tried to meet this obligation – not only by helping mark the LAD's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, but also by taking concrete steps to put into place policies and initiatives that will help protect all those who need the State's assistance.

In November 2004, I created an 11-member **Mental Health Task Force** that was designed to examine issues ranging from housing to jobs to access to care for the mentally ill. Its mission was not to study the issue ad nauseam, but to bring together independent, fresh thinkers who have national expertise. Their task was to recommend how we can better help the mentally ill lead normal lives. In March 2005, they did exactly that.

The Mental Health Task Force accomplished its primary goal and released a comprehensive report packed with concrete suggestions as to how we can better improve life for those with mental illnesses. Chairman Robert N. Davison and



the members of the Task Force made suggestions designed to improve access to care, provide better community-based services, and offer better quality care. Their recommendations included:

- Expansion of community screening centers so people have access to help closer to home;

- Improved access to psychiatric care so people do not have to wait as long to see a doctor;
- Expansion of supportive employment programs so individuals with mental illness have access to jobs;
- Implementation of a student loan forgiveness program to attract and retain quality social service workers;

I also introduced legislation to establish a \$200 million **Special Needs Housing Trust Fund**, which, over the next 10 years, will help create 10,000 new affordable housing opportunities for people with mental illness and other special needs. Our hope is to bring decency to the lives of people with mental illness, and to bring relief to the families that care for them.

In August 2005, this trust was established ensuring that New Jersey's most vulnerable residents have a place to call home. The money will be used to develop permanent supportive housing, community residences and other supportive housing arrangements for people with special needs, including mental illness and physical or

*continued on page 7*

### Inside Outreach

- Making N.J. Democratic Process as Inclusive and Accessible as Possible, by Attorney General Peter C. Harvey 2
- From The Desk of The Director: Increasing Accessibility to New Jersey's Shopping Centers 3
- Uncovering the Story of a Civil Rights Leader by Cassandra Jetter 4
- Division Holds First Conference for GLBT Community 5
- Civil Rights Director Elected to International Human Rights Post 5
- Commission Honors Civil Rights Advocates 6
- Employer Advisory Council Continues to Grow 6
- Family Leave Legal Primer Packs the House 7
- Fighting for Fairness for Everyone: Commissioner Richard T. Smith 8
- Rules, Regulations and Events Made More Accessible Online 8



## Making New Jersey's Democratic Process as Inclusive and Accessible as Possible *by Attorney General Peter C. Harvey*



Attorney General  
Peter C. Harvey

Although State law now enables any registered New Jerseyan to vote using a “no excuse” absentee ballot, it remains our commitment – and our duty – to ensure that eligible

voters who choose to vote in person can physically do so.

With this commitment in mind, we have been pursuing the State's first-ever polling place accessibility initiative, formally known as Operation NJ – PAASS (Polling Accessibility for All Sites in Our State).

Simply put, Operation NJ – PAASS is a comprehensive, statewide effort aimed at making sure that, eventually, every polling location throughout New Jersey is physically accessible to all voters.

Owing to a number of factors, some neighborhood polling locations throughout the State have been, and remain, difficult – if not impossible – to access for persons with mobility-related impairments.

For example, some polling sites lack accessible parking. Others lack barrier-free paths of travel within the building and/or outside. Still others lack visible signs directing voters to doorways and other areas that are accessible to those using a wheelchair, crutches, a walker or cane.

To obtain an accurate sense of the scope and nature of New Jersey's polling site accessibility needs, I directed the Division on Civil Rights in 2004 to initiate a program of polling place inspections.

At the same time, the Division was asked to collaborate with local election officials, advocacy groups and other stakeholders to develop a strategy to eventually make all New Jersey polling sites accessible. The result was Operation NJ-PAASS. Launched in May 2004, Operation NJ-PAASS consists of several key components including:

- A continuum of statewide polling place inspections, and the sharing of polling site inspection results with relevant agencies and community stakeholders
- the use of polling site inspection data to target polling places in need of relocation or, in the alternative, modifications that would make them 100 percent accessible to the disabled
- the use of training, education and information-sharing to generate greater awareness of the State's polling site accessibility initiative, and to encourage collaborative effort aimed at improving access for disabled voters.

To be certain, training, education and information-sharing are all vital elements of the effort to create positive change on behalf of voters with disabilities.

But the bedrock of Operation NJ-PAASS – because it can help us to chart a specific course for site improvements – remains a continuing program of polling place inspections in all 21 counties begun during the May 2004 Non-Partisan Municipal Elections.

During the 2004 Non-Partisan Municipal Elections, 33 State inspection teams surveyed a total of 162 polling sites. Of those sites, 67 percent were found to have accessibility-related deficiencies.

During the June 2004 Primary Election, 38 State inspection teams surveyed a total of 382 polling locations. In that round of inspections, 57 percent of the polling sites were found to have accessibility-related failures.

In the November 2004 General Election, 38 State inspection teams surveyed a total of 329 polling sites, finding accessibility-related problems at 28 percent of the sites inspected.

In each case where our inspectors found accessibility-related failings, the Division on Civil Rights sent Notices of Non-Compliance to the responsible local election officials.

Although the Attorney General's Office has jurisdiction to civilly prosecute violations of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) – we reserve the right to do so in the face of any unremedied accessibility failures – we have chosen, in carrying out our polling place inspection initiative, to not respond to violations punitively.

Rather – since our ultimate goal is improved access to voting for persons with mobility impairments – we have placed our emphasis on working in partnership with local jurisdictions to identify solutions, and to help them achieve 100 percent accessibility at polling sites they supervise.

However, we do not rule out the litigation option where jurisdictions refuse to make their polling places accessible.

As part of our 2004 NJ-PAASS effort, 80 polling sites that failed an initial inspection during either the May Non-Partisan Municipal Elections or the June Primary Election were chosen for re-inspection during the November 2004 General Election.

It is encouraging to note that, of those re-inspected sites, 67 percent were found to have already corrected the failures identified earlier.

But statewide, there is clearly more work to be done.

Once again in 2005, we assigned teams to inspect polling places during the May Non-Partisan Municipal Elections, and during the June Primary.

Thus far, a total of 599 polling places have been inspected this year – 461 initial inspections, and 138 re-inspections at sites that had previously failed.

Using the Division of Elections' “Polling Place Accessibility Checklist” as the standard, inspectors found deficiencies at 190 initial inspection sites, and observed failings at 52 reinspection sites.

*continued on page 7*

## From the Desk of the Director: Increasing Accessibility to New Jersey's Shopping Centers



Director J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo

The Office of the Attorney General, through the Division on Civil Rights has been working tirelessly to ensure that New Jersey continues down the path towards total accessibility for

everyone. Everyone should be able to vote at their local polling place. Everyone should be able to go to see a movie when they want to. And everyone should be able to go to a shopping center.

Recently, the Division published a report regarding our inspections of the accessibility of shopping malls for persons who are mobility-impaired and need to use doors that open without assistance.

The Division's staff tested accessibility to doorways at 28 different shopping malls throughout the State. As a result of the inspections conducted over several months, all twenty-eight shopping malls across New Jersey will now provide accessibility to persons with mobility impairments, by operating, repairing, or installing automatic-opening doors. The complete report is available to the public at the Division's Web site, [www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org).

This initiative focused on ensuring that individuals, particularly those who rely on wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility aids, would be able to get in the door of these establishments by use of automatic or power-assisted doors.

Attorney General Harvey and I agree that equal opportunity and equal access begin with everyone being able to get in the door. While individuals with disabilities face many hurdles in trying to access places of public accommodation, this initiative attempted to focus on that fundamental aspect of access — getting in the door. Gaining access to a facility for a person using a wheelchair or other mobility aid can be extremely difficult, if

not impossible, without some form of powered door opening device. We believe that the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and the Division's regulations on disability discrimination require installation of such devices as a reasonable accommodation.

Of the twenty-eight malls inspected, fifteen were found to have sufficient access by way of either automatic or power assisted doors. These were the Jersey Gardens Mall in Elizabeth, Hamilton Mall in Mays Landing, Freehold Raceway Mall in Freehold, Monmouth Mall in Eatontown, Deptford Mall in Deptford, Paramus Park Shopping Center in Paramus, Garden State Plaza in Paramus, Fashion Center in Paramus, Bergen Mall in Paramus, MarketFair in Princeton, Quakerbridge Mall in Lawrenceville, Bridgewater Commons in Bridgewater, Ocean County Mall in Toms River, Mall at Short Hills in Short Hills, and Brunswick Square Mall in North Brunswick.

Seven additional malls were found to have at least one entrance equipped with an automatic or power-assisted door, but had other issues related to the accessibility of their entrance doors. These include Moorestown Mall in Moorestown, Echelon Mall in Voorhees, Phillipsburg Mall in Phillipsburg, Livingston Mall in Livingston, Rockaway Town Square in Rockaway, Woodbridge Center in Woodbridge, and Willowbrook Mall in Wayne.

According to the report, six of malls surveyed were found to have no power-assisted or automatic doors at their entrances. They are Burlington Center in Burlington, Shore Mall in Egg Harbor Township, Newport Center Mall in Jersey City, Menlo Park Mall in Edison, Cumberland Mall in Vineland, and Cherry Hill Mall in Cherry Hill.

These malls will now be working to remedy the issues and have all agreed to install special doors, making the mall

entrances more accessible to persons with mobility-impairments.

I am pleased to be able to let you know that, including the commitments received as part of this initiative, every one of the twenty-eight malls reviewed is or soon will be accessible. This not only helps to make these malls accessible to shoppers who use mobility aids, but also to millions of parents with strollers and senior citizens. More access means a more enjoyable shopping experience for the consumer, and more sales for retailers and mall operators. In short, everyone benefits from this initiative.

As a result of the inspections, within the next twelve months, New Jersey's shopping malls will become among the most accessible in the nation. That bodes well for New Jersey's consumers and business, and more than sixty-seven million shoppers that visit New Jersey's shopping malls annually.

Improved accessibility through the use of automatic or power-assisted doors gives everyone in New Jersey a way of "getting in the door." ▼

Need Help with  
Housing  
Discrimination?

Call the  
toll-free  
Civil Rights  
Housing Hotline  
at  
1-866-405-3050





## Assemblyman Dr. James O. Hill, Father of the Law Against Discrimination: Uncovering the Story of a Civil Rights Leader

by Cassandra Jetter, Investigator, Division on Civil Rights

On April 16, 1945, as World War II was still being fought, a unique bill was passed in New Jersey. That bill was immediately signed into law by Governor Walter Edge, thereby establishing the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD) as the nation's first comprehensive state civil rights statute.

The bill had been introduced by Dr. James O. Hill, a Republican, African-American Assemblyman from Newark. At its core, Assemblyman Hill's proposal expanded New Jersey's existing civil rights laws, consolidating them into one comprehensive statute that prohibited racial discrimination in employment and created an agency to enforce the law, the Division Against Discrimination.

Sixty years later, the LAD has been expanded numerous times, to prohibit discrimination in places of public accommodation (1949), the armed forces (1953), and public housing (1954), all the way up to the recent inclusion of domestic partnership status (2004). Also, the name of the agency which enforces the law has changed to the NJ Division on Civil Rights.

But back in 1945, twenty years before the federal Civil Rights Act, Assemblyman Hill had the foresight to recognize that first steps towards eradicating racial inequality and prejudices upon blacks and other oppressed groups were best taken through legislation and education. While the LAD stands as a monument to him and his colleagues in the Assembly and Senate who unanimously supported the bill, little is known about the man who sponsored this historic piece of legislation.

Dr. Hill was politically and socially active within Essex County, where he vigorously advocated constitutional reforms, particularly civil rights guarantees, and sought to inform the general public of the indignities from which their African-American neighbors suffered.

Dr. Hill frequently published articles in *The Newark Evening News* and the *Newark*



DR. JAMES O. HILL  
*One of two known public pictures of Dr. James O. Hill*

*Ledger*, local newspapers between 1919 and 1939. In one such article, entitled "Racial Segregation," Dr. Hill stated, "Racial segregation does not pay. It is expensive, it is unjust, it is unfair, it is undemocratic and un-American. It divides our citizens. We have one flag, one President, one Congress and we are one people; therefore, let there be one Army, one Navy, one National Guard, opened to all the citizens of the United States of America."

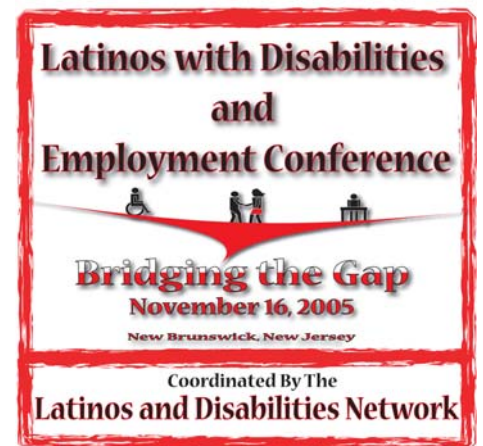
This pragmatic outlook on our nation won over many supporters. By simply pointing out that not only did segregation not make sense, but was costly to taxpayers and inherently un-American, he took the wind out of the sails of any opponents.

Assemblyman Hill served four terms in the state Assembly, from 1943 through 1947. In the Assembly, Dr. Hill conscientiously voiced his principles of upholding, enforcing and extending the provisions of the law to include guarantees against discrimination in housing, education, employment and public accommodations. In 1945, Dr. Hill sponsored legislation

which expanded NJ's existing civil rights laws, which previously prohibited only racial discrimination, to prohibit discrimination based on creed, national origin or ancestry. Dr. Hill later also sponsored legislation that permitted county communicable disease hospitals to admit rheumatic fever patients so that everyone would have equal access to adequate medical treatment. In 1947, Dr. Hill sponsored legislation on fair employment practices, again working towards leveling the field for all New Jerseyans.

On May 29, 1961, Dr. Hill died in the Presbyterian Hospital in his hometown of Newark at the age of 67. During his life he held on to the belief that all people deserve to live in an environment free from discrimination and he dedicated his life to ensuring that someday, everyone in New Jersey would live their lives free from unlawful discrimination.

A simple idea, an inspiring thought, a powerful piece of groundbreaking legislation - we remember the man who gave New Jersey his best. ▼



See [www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org) for registration information.

## Division Holds First Conference for GLBT Community

In a first for the State of New Jersey, over 100 community leaders, activists and constituents attended the Division's first ever GLBT law conference in June. The conference, entitled *Protecting Sexual Minorities from Discrimination in Employment, Housing and Public Accommodations* was held on June 14, 2005 at Douglass College.

Acting Governor Codey, Attorney General Harvey and several State Agencies, including the Office on Bias Crime, the Department of Human Services and the Division on AIDS/HIV Services co-sponsored the conference. Community Co-sponsors of the event included the Rutgers University Task Force on Gay Concerns, NJ Lesbian and Gay Coalition, Garden State Equality Education Fund,

NOW-NJ Foundation, NJ State Bar Association GLBT Rights Group, GRAANJ and numerous other GLBT organizations in New Jersey.

Director Frank Vespa-Papaleo, Assemblyman Reed Gusciora and Civil Rights Commissioner John C. Campbell welcomed the participants. Special Assistant Bear Atwood, Esq. and Deputy Attorney General Charles Cohen presented an overview of the Division and discussed the Law Against Discrimination (LAD) as it relates to protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation, AIDS/HIV and gender identity and expression.

Following the legal presentation a panel of GLBT community leaders, the Deputy Attorneys General and Director Vespa-

Papaleo engaged in a dialogue with participants about the LAD, discrimination the GLBT community faces in NJ and how the Division can work with the community to better enforce the LAD.

Panelists included David Morris of the Gay Activist Alliance in Morris County, Laura Pople, president of the NJ Lesbian & Gay Coalition, and Barbara Casbar, president of the Gender Rights Advocacy Association of New Jersey.

This exciting and productive conference was part of the Division's ongoing outreach to the public to provide education on protections under the LAD and the Family Leave Act. ▼

## Civil Rights Director Elected to International Human Rights Post

On August 17, 2005, Division on Civil Rights Director J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo was elected to the board of directors of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies.

The International Association of Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. made up of agencies from around the globe responsible for enforcing a variety of human and civil rights laws in their respective national, provincial, state, county, and municipal jurisdictions.

IAOHRA is dedicated to promoting civil and human rights around the world, including in the United States and Canada. It also works closely with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the United States Department of Justice, and the U.S. Congress. It's Web site is located at [www.sso.org/iaohra](http://www.sso.org/iaohra).

"IAOHRA is an important forum for law enforcement agencies – agencies who are

fighting similar fights in their respective jurisdictions — to come together, compare notes, and inspire each other to carry on the fight," said Attorney General Peter Harvey. "Having Director Vespa-Papaleo serve as a member of the board will ensure that New Jersey's anti-discrimination statutes help inform and guide civil rights agencies around the globe."

"New Jersey was one of the original founders of the International Association of Human Rights Agencies in 1949, and has been a member for decades. I am proud to follow in that tradition," said Director Vespa-Papaleo. "I am excited to be able to serve the Association as a board member, and further raise the visibility of all of our efforts here in New Jersey."

Vespa-Papaleo added that New Jersey has one of the most progressive, comprehensive civil rights statutes in the United States, "which means it is one of the most progressive laws in the world. I will be glad to pass on the lessons of our experiences here for the benefit of all IAOHRA members. One reason I believe

our law is so progressive is because enforcement of our anti-discrimination law falls within the Division on Civil Rights, part of the Office of Attorney General. Ours is one of very few that is part of a State Attorney General's Office."

Jim Stowe, President of IAOHRA and Director of the Columbus Community Relations Commission in Ohio, said the Association "is excited to have Director Vespa-Papaleo join the Board of Directors."

"I know he is passionate about issues pertaining to new immigrants, children who are victims of bias-based bullying and harassment, and persons with disabilities," said Stowe. "We welcome Frank's dedication to civil and human rights issues."

The organization is presently arranging its 58<sup>th</sup> annual convention and, thanks to a bid submitted by Director Vespa-Papaleo, is considering to hold it in Atlantic City. It would be the first time since NJ co-founded the organization 57 years ago that the group will meet in Atlantic City. ▼



## Commission Honors Civil Rights Advocates

On October 12, the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights held a special public meeting at the Office of the Mayor of Vineland in order to honor eight New Jerseyans on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD).

The meeting was hosted by Vineland's own Commissioner Richard T. Smith (ed. for more about Commissioner Smith, see pg. 8). The honorees were chosen based on their "enduring lifetime commitment to equal opportunity and civil rights", said Commission Chairwoman Olga Vasquez-Clough.

The recipients of this lifetime achievement award were: **Mayra Arroyo Martinez** of Hispanos Pro Educacion; **Karen E. Barnett**, Director of the Bridgeton Municipal Alliance–Youth to Youth Program; **Kermit E. Bruner**, charter president of the Greater Vineland Branch of the NAACP as well as founder of the Vineland NAACP Youth Council;

**Samuel L. Clark**, of Vineland's Strategic Neighborhood Assistance Program as well as member of the Steward Board of the Cumberland Human Relations Commission; **Beatrice Corbin**, former Vice Chair to the Tri-County Agency, former Center Director and Field Operations Manager for the Southwest Citizens Organization for Poverty Elimination; **Angelo J. Genova, Esq.**, Labor Counsel to the New Jersey Association of Counties as well as Special Counsel on Civil Rights Matters to the New Jersey League of Municipalities, **Mark Melamed** founder of "The Gabriel Project" which engages students to raise money to bring children who are dying of heart disease to the United States for lifesaving treatments; and **Carmen Miranda-Jones**, an educator and co-founder of El Veterano, a Spanish language newspaper serving the Latino populations in South Jersey, Philadelphia and Delaware. ▼

### Want to Learn More?

#### Private Training is Available

*The Division on Civil Rights offers Private Training on how to avoid and deal with discrimination.*

#### Contact the Bureau of Prevention and Community Relations at:

- Phone: 1-800-830-0647
- TTY: (609) 292-1785
- Fax: (609) 777-0466
- e-mail: [DCRTraining@njcivilrights.org](mailto:DCRTraining@njcivilrights.org)

Register on the Web at:  
[www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org)

## Employer Advisory Council Continues to Grow

The Division on Civil Rights is committed to working in partnership with NJ employers to minimize workplace discrimination. In pursuit of this commitment, we created a **Division on Civil Rights Employer Advisory Council** (EAC) to establish a consistent dialogue with business leaders, human resource professionals, attorneys, and others about our work, our policies, regulations, initiatives, and cases.

The third regional meeting of the EAC was hosted by Catherine Wells, Esq. of the law firm Wolff & Samson, PC on September 20, 2005 in West Orange.

After the meeting, Ms Wells stated, "The meeting was a tremendous success and the program was terrific. It was nice seeing everyone on the Council again to continue

our work. This is truly a dynamic, responsive forum for employers."

Representatives from approximately 65 employers attended the meeting. The council provides an opportunity for employers and senior staff at the Division to work together toward the common goal of reducing workplace discrimination. The meetings are designed to give employers a better understanding of how DCR functions and processes complaints that come before us. Director Vespa-Papaleo, senior staff and Division lawyers are there to answer questions about the division, introduce themselves to the employer community and provide updates on the law and regulations.

The EAC also gives the Division an opportunity to hear from the business

community how Division lawyers and investigators can better work with employers in case investigation and processing and what resources the Division can provide them in their effort to address discrimination in their workplaces.

The next meeting will be held on January 17, 2006 in Monroe Township and hosted by EAC Co-chair and vice-president of the NJ Business & Industry Association Christine Stearns. If you are interested in attending this or other future meetings, please contact Special Assistant Bear Atwood, Esq. At 609-292-5326 or [bear.atwood@NJCivilRights.org](mailto:bear.atwood@NJCivilRights.org). ▼



## Family Leave Legal Primer Packs the House

Close to 200 attorneys and human resources professionals participated in the 2nd Annual Division on Civil Rights Attorney Seminar entitled *A Legal Primer on the NJ Family Leave Act, the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act, and Reasonable Accommodations under State and Federal Laws*. The seminar was held on September 6 at the New Jersey Bar Association's Law Center in New Brunswick. The seminar was free and hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) and the Institute for Continuing Legal Education.

The evening was designed to be a unique opportunity to highlight some of the similarities and distinctions in state and federal family leave laws as well as the many pitfalls to litigating such cases in court or before the DCR and the EEOC.

Division on Civil Rights' Director Vespa-Papaleo and EEOC Newark area office Director Corrado Gigante both focused on distinguishing the State and Federal laws, emphasizing on the noticed increase in disability claims in both state and federal capacity. Both advised the human resources professionals to revise their company's handbook to ensure that they

address the growing disability related requests. Vespa-Papaleo warned that he would issue a finding of probable cause if the company failed to inform employees of both FLA and FMLA and emphasizing that just covering one of the two laws is not sufficient. Employers are also required to engage in an interactive process with individuals who made a request for a time leave.

The evening benefited from a cross-disciplinary panel of experts, giving the attendees an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers on the spot. The speakers for the evening were: Cynthia Pellegrino of the NJ State Bar Association; Division on Civil Rights Director J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo, who spoke about reasonable accommodations under the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD); Corrado Gigante, Director of the EEOC Newark Area Office spoke about reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Assistant Attorney General Aney Chandy addressed the details of the NJ Family Leave Act (FLA); and from the US Department of Labor, Wage & Hour, Director Joseph Petrecca and Senior Investigator Sandra Steiner informed the audience about the Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The two private attorneys who gave presentations provided a different perspective on the evening's topic than their colleagues from government agencies: Julie Colin, Esq. of Hill Wallach in Princeton and Joseph E. Gehring, Jr., Esq. of Gehring, Tatman & Satriale, located in Newark and New York City, presented compelling advice for plaintiffs making a case and, respectively, defending employers under the FLA, FMLA, LAD & ADA.

Co-sponsors of the event included the Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey, the Garden State Bar Association, the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey, the Asian and Pacific-American Lawyers' Association of New Jersey, the South Asian Bar Association, and the New Jersey State Bar Association's GLBT Rights Committee, Individual Rights Section, Labor & Employment Law Section, Elder & Disability Law Section, Minorities in the Profession Section, and the Women in the Profession Section

Future seminars and conferences will be announced on our Web site, [www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org). ▼

## Milestones

*continued from pg. 1*

developmental disabilities. This helps ensure that individuals with special needs have access to meaningful housing alternatives to avoid institutionalization and homelessness.

In July 2005, I signed bills to strengthen the electoral process in New Jersey by **expanding voter access**. All elected officials have a duty to the rule of democracy to ensure that people have access to and confidence in the voting system. As such, working closely with the Senate and Assembly, I have signed into law measures which:

- allow voter registration up to 21 days before an election, instead of the

previous 29 days;

- require that voting machines produce a voter-verified paper record for each vote cast;
- permit any registered voter to vote by absentee ballot if they so choose, without having to provide a reason for not being able to vote in person on the day of an election.

The result of all of these initiatives is the fair and equal treatment of all residents of our great state. No one is left out, no is left behind. I can think of no greater accomplishment for government. ▼

## Polling Accessibility

*continued from pg. 2*

During the recent 2005 General Election, our inspection teams once again visited polling sites throughout the state, and targeted a mix of sites that had never been inspected, as well as those that had been inspected and failed.

Our commitment is to continue to work with local election officials, advocacy groups and others to make the voting process as inclusive and accessible as possible for all eligible New Jerseyans.

Editor's Note: To view a complete report on Operation NJ-PAASS, visit the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Web site at [www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org). ▼



## Fighting for Fairness for Everyone



Richard T. Smith

The first thing you notice about Commissioner Richard T. Smith is his size. At six feet plus he tends to dwarf everyone but pro athletes and lumberjacks. The second thing you notice is his voice.

It's a soft, resonant voice; one that envelopes audiences and draws them in.

There's a reason for that voice: Commissioner Smith graduated from Trenton State College with a Speech Communications & Theater major and did a stint at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Manhattan. He is active in his local repertory theater, Downtown

Company of Performing Artists (DCPA). In fact, this past August he could be seen playing Coalhouse Walker, Jr. in *Ragtime*. Though he performs for the sheer joy of it, his input at DCPA has helped the programming to become more diverse and the casts more inclusive.

He grew up in Trenton, the youngest of ten children. His mother, a gregarious woman who was not afraid to speak up or speak out, encouraged her children to do the same. Her motto was: "You must fight for fairness for everyone, do not use race as a crutch."

Now, as President of NAACP of Cumberland County and a member of the NJ Commission on Civil Rights, that is exactly what he does. Not only did he get the Cumberland County branch of the NAACP re-chartered, but now it has

gotten national and state recognition for its membership drives, youth programs and fund-raising. (This interview was conducted while he was at a golf tournament raising scholarship money for local students.) The hard work has paid off.

"Being a member of the Commission on Civil Rights is truly a privilege," Smith said. "It adds a greater context to my work with the NAACP and gives me a forum to hear more about other initiatives and concerns from throughout the state. It's an honor to be doing good work with the Division on Civil Rights, its staff and its Director, Frank Vespa-Papleo. Together, we're fighting for fairness for everyone - just like my mother taught me all those years ago." ▼

## Rules, Regulations & Events Made More Accessible Online

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights has recently enhanced its online presence in order to make important texts, key initiatives and events easier to pinpoint. The changes will make it easier for all visitors to the Division's Web site, [www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org), to keep track of the agency's ever-increasing scope of activities. Whether it's registering online for training or the next seminar, finding out about upcoming events where the Division will be present or the latest press release, the new layout will help you find what you are looking for quickly.

Additionally, the Division has recently posted its Rules of Practice and Procedure, its policy on extensions and important forms for attorneys alongside texts of the NJ Law Against Discrimination and the NJ Family Leave Act. All of these can be downloaded quickly and easily from the extensive Publications page.

The most recent change to the Web site, suggested by the Employer Advisory Council, will make it easier for employers, housing agents and all places of public



accommodations to comply with the law by making available the required anti-discrimination posters. Not displaying the proper posters constitutes a violation of the LAD, but now it is easier than ever to make sure you have the ones you need. Simply visit the Web site and click on the Posters link to see which posters you or your company need and download them and print them out. Of course, posters can still be requested from the Division. Just call the office nearest you and they will be sent out quickly and at no cost to you. ▼

*Want to Stay Informed?*

*Join Our Mailing List*

To make sure you are kept up to date on Division on Civil Rights events, issues and publications, sign up for our mailing list online at

[www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org)



## New Jersey Celebrates 60 Years of the Law Against Discrimination



On November 2, the Essex County Bar Association and the NJ Division on Civil Rights celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD) at the recently re-opened Historic Essex County Courthouse in Newark.

The event was sponsored by the Essex County Bar Association, Office of the Attorney General, New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights, NJ Division on Civil Rights, Garden State Bar Association, Association of Black Women Lawyers of NJ, Hispanic Bar Association of NJ, and the NJ State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division, Minorities in the Profession, Women in the Profession, Law & Employment Law, and Individual Rights Sections, and GLBT Law and Diversity Committees.

Pictured **above** are the main speakers of the evening (from left to right): Division on Civil Rights **Director J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo**, who acted as master of ceremonies and also spoke on the development and history of the LAD; **Attorney General Peter C. Harvey**, who told the audience about current initiatives which are keeping the LAD relevant and aggressive; **Maria Pepe**, the former LAD complainant in the 1974 landmark case N.O.W. v. Hoboken Little League, gave a powerfully moving speech about how a 12 year-old girl battled for her right to simply play baseball and opened sports to include girls across the nation; **James Dale**, the plaintiff in the landmark case Dale v. Boy Scouts of America, delivered an energetic reflection on facing sexual orientation discrimination; and the **Honorable Dickinson R. Debevoise**, United States District Court for the District of New Jersey captivated the audience with anecdotes of the early days of the civil rights movement in the South when he worked as a young lawyer alongside such civil rights leaders as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Medgar Evers.



State of New Jersey  
**Office of The Attorney General**  
Department of Law & Public Safety

Division on Civil Rights

**Outreach**

**Outreach** is a publication of the The New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law and Public Safety, Division on Civil Rights.

**Publisher:** J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo [director@njcivilrights.org](mailto:director@njcivilrights.org)  
**Editor:** William Scheckel • [william.scheckel@njcivilrights.org](mailto:william.scheckel@njcivilrights.org)  
**Assistant Editor:** Chris Tester • [chris.teste@njcivilrights.org](mailto:chris.teste@njcivilrights.org)  
**Contributors:** Bear Atwood, Cassandra Jetter, Esther Nevarez  
**Press Officer:** Lee Moore • [leland.moore@lps.state.nj.us](mailto:leland.moore@lps.state.nj.us)  
**Photographs:** Rick Salmastrelli, William Scheckel  
**Translators:** Hector Ayala



## Division on Civil Rights Offices & Contact Information

**Atlantic City** 26 South Pennsylvania Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
**Phone: 609-441-3100**  
**Fax:** 609-441-3578 • **TTY:** 609-441-7648

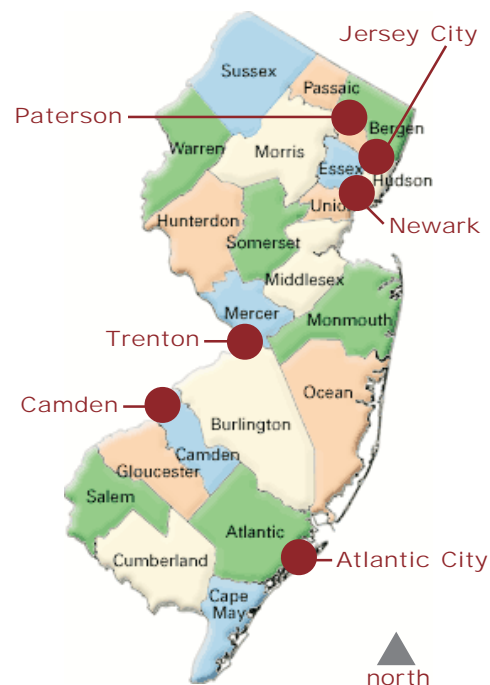
**Camden** One Port Center 2 Riverside Drive, 4th Floor Camden, NJ 08103  
**Phone: 856-614-2550**  
**Fax:** 856-614-2568 • **TTY:** 856-614-2574

**Jersey City** 574 Newark Avenue  
Jersey City, NJ 07306  
*Walk-in Office on Wednesdays, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.*

**Newark** 31 Clinton Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor P.O. Box 46001 Newark, NJ 07102  
**Phone: 973-648-2700**  
**Fax:** 973-648-4405 • **TTY:** 973-648-4678

**Paterson** 100 Hamilton Plaza, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Paterson, NJ 07501  
**Phone: 973-977-4500**  
**Fax:** 973-977-4511 • **TTY:** 973-977-1955

**Trenton** 140 East Front Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor P.O. Box 090 Trenton, NJ 08625-0090  
**Phone: 609-292-4605**  
**Fax:** 609-984-3812 • **TTY:** 609-292-1785



And we're on the Web for you at [www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org)

Division on

# CIVIL RIGHTS

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General  
Department of Law and Public Safety

**Division on Civil Rights**

Director J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo  
P.O. Box 090  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0090

[www.NJCivilRights.org](http://www.NJCivilRights.org)